Package for prevention of farmers' suicides

2894. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government are considering to introduce a package for preventing farmers' suicides in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the National Commission on Farmers has recommended formulation of a comprehensive national policy for farmers; and

(d) if so, the views of Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government is drawing up a package for the districts worst affected by the incidence of suicide by farmers. The package would address their credit, insurance, irrigation and subsidiary income needs, through dairy, poultry and horticulture.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) The recommendation is under consideration of the Government.

Agreement with Colombo on water management

2895. SHRI B. J. PANDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the ICAR and Colombo based International Water Management Institute have signed an agreement for collaboration in different aspects of water management to enhance productivity in water sector;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how far this will solve the water problem in our country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTI LAL BHURIA): (a) Yes, Sir. A Memorandum of Agreement between Indian Council of Agricultural Research/Department of Agricultural Research and Education, Government of India and the International Water

Management Institute (an International Future Harvest Center under the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research), Colombo was signed at New Delhi on 25th November, 1996.

(b) The terms of the agreement are implemented on an annual basis. Each year a new Workplan is developed and agreed for implementation. The Workplan for 2006-07 was signed on 24th January, 2006 and shall remain valid upto 30th March, 2007, unless otherwise terminated, modified, or extended by mutual consent.

Under the agreement, there is a provision to develop and implement collaborative projects in the areas of mutual interest, share information and expertise in the areas of advanced research, bring out joint publications and undertake other means to achieve the objectives.

Under the agreement, International Water Management Institute (IWMI) also helps and sponsors Indian institutions/scientists for capacity building, training and participation in important meetings/seminars/workshops.

(c) The collaboration with IWMI will be very useful to solve the water management related issues in agriculture in India. The umbrella agreement with IWMI covers joint projects in India in the following areas:—

(i) Multiple water use systems for small holder farmers.

(ii) Understanding and improving water productivity.

(iii) Watershed management in rainfed areas and water institutions.

(iv) Safe and sustainable use of low-quality waters.

(v) Drought assessment and management.

(vi) Groundwater governance and management.

(vii) Water health and environment.

Assistance to Punjab for sugarcane development

2896. SHRI DHARAM PAL SABHARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a provision of Rs. 120 crores was made in the Annual Plan for paying to Punjab @ Rs. 20/- per quintal for 600 lakh quintals of sugarcane to be crushed;